

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**REGULAR MEETING****Monday, May 12, 2003**

Present: Dennis Brunner, Colleen Craig, Glen Dey, Janet Miller, M.S. Mitchell, and Trix Niernberger

Absent: June Bailey

Also Present: Sharon Fearey – City Council; Kathy Dittmer - Riverside Citizens Association; and Doug Kupper, Larry Hoetmer and Maryann Crockett (staff)

First Vice President Niernberger called the meeting to order at approximately 3:35 p.m. The minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 14, 2003, were reviewed and approved.

New board member Dennis Brunner, appointed by Councilman Bob Martz - District V, introduced himself commenting that he was a former basketball coach, athletic director and teacher at North High School for 30 years and that he retired in 1995. He commented that he has looking forward to serving on the Park Board.

1. **Discussion of Sewage Lift Station in North Riverside Park.** Janet Miller said she had received a complaint from a neighbor adjacent to the lift station and added that she couldn't remember whether the Park Board had reviewed the project. Director Kupper stated that the Board talked about construction of the lift station prior to 2000 (and Miller's appointment) in conjunction with discussion of the Riverside Park System Master Plan. It was also noted that the project had been presented to the DAB for neighborhood comment. Miller requested and clarified that in the future, the Park Board review all proposed projects to be built in parks.

Miller provided pictures of the concealing wall surrounding the lift station and suggested that the wall be raised to completely cover the view of the building. Director Kupper reported that the situation would be corrected with a cap off wall. Miller also suggested that some type of plant cover be added to soften and conceal the wall. Suggestions were Virginia Creeper, Boston Ivy or some other creeping ivy. Miller also mentioned the drainage problem behind the structure, stating that there was standing water for as long as a week after it rained and that it was a mosquito hazard.

Finally, Miller requested that her comments and suggestions be considered in future project designs. Director Kupper stated that a copy of the meeting minutes would be forwarded to Public Works - Engineering concerning the drainage issue and that he would speak to the Water Department concerning the possibility of providing additional landscaping. Larry Hoetmer, Landscape Architect, referred board members to a conceptual drawing of the lift station and stated that several locations were discussed prior to the decision to locate the station at the present site.

2. Reports on the following items.

- Leon Robinson Park Dedication. M. S. Mitchell reported that he thought the dedication was beautifully done and mentioned President Bailey's correspondence thanking staff for their efforts. There was brief discussion concerning location of the park near Mr. Robinson's home and friends; complaints from neighbors adjacent to the park about the softball players using the wooden fence as a backstop; condition of the playground equipment currently located at the park; and future park development and use of the \$5,000 donation from Joe Robinson (Leon's son) towards park improvements.
- Pesticide Free Park News Conference and Pesticide Free Park Dedication – Big Arkansas River Park. First Vice President Niernberger reported that a news conference was held on Wednesday, May 7, at 2:00 p.m., which was covered by three television stations and three radio stations. She also provided board members a copy of an article from *F5 Wichita* dated May 8, entitled "Wichita clean ups its act". Mitchell provided a copy of the article from the *Wichita Eagle* dated May 8, entitled "City makes some parks free from pesticides". Niernberger also mentioned the editorial in the *Wichita Eagle* on May 9.

Director Kupper said reporters have asked him how much money the policy was going to save and that his honest answer was that it might cost more because not using pesticides is more labor intensive. He added that implications of the entire program including costs, introducing native plantings, allowing areas to grow, etc., will need to be evaluated by staff as the program progresses. Glen Dey mentioned the need to clarify that the policy applied to Chisholm Creek Park North only, since the *Wichita Eagle* article just referred to Chisholm Creek Park.

There was general discussion concerning toxicity and use of weed killers and other pesticides by homeowners. Niernberger said she hoped the positive publicity would spark a community-wide effort. She also mentioned that although she would no longer be serving on the Park Board, since the policy was a Park Board initiative, that it be would reviewed and expanded upon on an annual basis.

3. Director's Update. Director Kupper reported briefly on the following items:

- Wildwood Park Dedication and Chautauqua Park Dedication. Reported that after the Wildwood Park Dedication had been scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 7, staff received word that the Chautauqua Park dedication had also been scheduled on that date. He commented that staff was working with the Chautauqua group to get that dedication scheduled at 1:30 p.m. He also apologized for the scheduling conflict.
- Skate Park. Reported that staff had submitted a grant application for Land Water and Conservation Funding for development of the site.
- Longview Park. Reported that the bid would be awarded next week for the picnic shelter at Longview Park. He commented that the Longview Neighborhood Association had donated funds for the shelter.

- Board Appointments. Reminded board members that appointments expired June 30, 2003, and that they may want to speak to their respective City Council representatives regarding re-appointment.
- Budget. Commented that the budget process would begin on Monday and that he hoped to have information to report at the June meeting. Niernberger asked about pool hours and possible pool closings. Director Kupper stated that all pools were currently slated to be open; however, \$45,000 still needed to be cut from the budget. He suggested that fourteen days of rain could possibly solve the budget crunch. Responding to Mitchell, Director Kupper stated that he had provided board members a list of budget cuts.
- Summer of Discovery. Commented that enrollment was down and that some centers might be consolidated. He mentioned Aley/Osage and Evergreen/McAdams/Lynette Woodard. However, since registration was still on-going, he said the final decision would be made after registration was complete. He commented that 30-35 participants were needed at each site to make the program economically feasible.
- Possible Partnership with the Boys and Girls Club. Reported that the City may enter into a partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs to use park facilities for their programming needs. He commented that they do not need to be a State licensed day care to provide youth programming. He said he would have further information on the proposal at the June meeting.
- Mowing Schedules. Reminded board members that the Park Department maintains over 6,000 acres and of park land and landscaped medians. He stated that mowing schedules were established for each area depending on location and usage. He commented that areas are usually mowed on a seven-day, fourteen-day, twenty-one-day, or twenty-eight-day rotation. He added that weather conditions sometimes delay scheduled mowing and that board members may receive complaints concerning certain area.
- College Hill. Niernberger inquired about the flooding in the low area by the tennis courts in College Hill Park. Director Kupper commented that the area was probably designed for water retention to save on irrigation costs and that flooding in the area was a constant problem.
- West Side Rotary Club. Reported that staff had received an offer to construct a handicapped accessible playground on the west side by the Rotary Club. He said staff was negotiating with them on the possibility of converting some existing play areas.
- Grove Park Community Development Block Grant Funding (CDBG). Reported that staff was researching how much of the \$750,000 allocation was left for development of the playground and picnic areas. Dey inquired about opening the gate at the park.
- Planting Beds by Park Villa. Miller asked why flower beds near Park Villa had not been planted and if plants had been ordered and were scheduled to be planted in the area. Director Kupper commented that staff was still in the process of planting flower beds and that he would check to see if any plants had been order for that area. Kathy Dittmer, Riverside Citizens Association, briefly mentioned the names of two volunteers who had offered to assist park staff.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 4:15 p.m.

First Vice President Trix Niernberger

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett, Clerk
Recording Secretary